

### c.—THERAPEUTICS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM AND MIND.

**SUTURES IN DIVIDED NERVES.**—Dr. W. C. Dahney, *Va. Med. Monthly*, Jan., in a paper entitled "Sutural Re-union of Divided Nerves," after a brief recapitulation and discussion of some of the principal published facts, comes to the following conclusions:

1. The effects of nerve section and nerve irritation are very dissimilar, but have generally been confounded.

2. Nerve section causes a very gradual degeneration of the peripheral portion of the nerve and of the muscles to which it is distributed (if it is motor in function)—several months usually elapsing before such a result occurs.

3. If re-union of a divided mixed nerve takes place, sensation is usually recovered first and motion more slowly—the irritability of the muscles returning gradually.

4. The two ends of a divided nerve should be approximated as nearly as possible; but re-union has several times occurred in young subjects when the ends were an inch or more distant from each other.

5. It is advisable to stretch the two portions of a divided nerve in order to approximate them more closely if they are far removed from each other.

6. Sutural re-union may be practiced several months even after the division of a nerve, so long as a trace of unscarred irritability remains, and the peripheral portion contains nerve fibres.

7. Small, carbolized catgut sutures are preferable, and the nerve sheath only should be pierced.

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**THE EFFECTS OF CHLORAL**—At the meeting of the Clinical Society of London, held January 9th, the committee appointed by the society to investigate "What deleterious effects follow the prolonged and continuous use of chloral in ordinary doses," reported that seventy special replies and three printed papers had been received in reply to nearly one thousand circulars, distributed throughout the profession, followed a few months later by a second appeal, made public through the freely accorded medium of the medical press. Twenty-nine answers stated that, after extensive experience of chloral, in long-continued doses, no ill effects had been observed. Ten of these correspondents had special opportunities for observation afforded by asylum practice; and M. Curgenvin, Dr. Theodore Williams, Dr. William Squire, Dr. Buzzard, Dr. Clifford Allbut, and others, furnished cases in which chloral had been regularly and beneficially taken for periods varying from two to ten years. Before proceeding to analyze the replies received from those who had observed inconvenient effects to follow the use of chloral, the committee had drawn up a brief summary of what had already been recorded on the subject. Their special information was arranged under the various headings of the schedule.

A. *Nervous System.*—Fourteen answers recorded cases in which nervous

nicotinized nerves showed that the drug enfeebls both motor and sensory fibres (or their terminations), that the sensory nerves are acted upon first and more persistently, that small doses exalt the irritability of the motor fibres slightly before depressing it, and that repeated doses affect the nerve excitability exactly like the first poisoning. Since the effect of nicotin on nerve excitability has passed off, while the animal is still in the condition in which the twitchings cannot be reproduced, the question is yet involved in obscurity; although the second dose of nicotin does not cause spasms, other agents, like strychnia and picrotoxin, act in the usual manner and dose.

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THE following are the titles of a few of the papers on the Therapeutics of the Nervous System and Mind, that have appeared since our last issue:

LEVIS, The New Anæsthetic, the Bromide of Ethyl, *Phil. Med. Times*, Jan. 17.—SASSEZKI, The Action of Amyl-Nitrite on the Bodily Temperature, *St. Petersburg. med. Wochenschrift*, Nov. 8.—EARLE, The Cinchona Cure for Intemperance, *Chic. Med. Jour. & Exam.*, Feb.—REED, Nitrite of Amyl—Its History, Physiological Action, and Therapeutics, *Detroit Lancet*, Feb.—PETERS, On the Therapeutic Uses of Some of the Ranunculacæ, Especially in Nervous Diseases, *The Physician*, Jan.—ELY, Observations on the Effects of Tobacco, *N. Y. Med. Jour.*, April.—PARK, The Treatment of Exophthalmic Goitre, *Practitioner*, March.

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